

on two questions of some difficulty  
which have ~~some~~ immediate practical  
importance at the present moment;  
and as to which you have not pronounced  
<sup>a decided</sup> ~~an~~ opinion in your recent article  
in Silliman's Journal - You are aware  
that a new Edition of Stendel's nomenclator  
is now being prepared by Mr Dayman  
Jackson Secretary to the Linnæan Soc<sup>y</sup>.  
Mr Jackson is next to nothing as a botanist  
but a painstaking man with a taste  
for bibliographical research and, I dare  
say, will do his work well - but he properly  
feels that he is not the man to decide  
difficult questions - After a little  
preliminary discussion it is I believe  
settled that a small committee (of which  
I am to be one) is to consider & endeavour  
to solve the difficulties

The first ~~has~~ <sup>its urgency</sup> been for some time  
pressing, but has been very greatly  
increased by the publication of the  
Genera plantarum - and under  
the general heading come several  
special cases.

10 Southwell Gardens London SW  
Christmas day 1883

My dear Dr Gray

I will not let this day go by  
without sending our best greetings  
and good wishes to you & Mrs Gray  
with the hope that we may meet  
you both in the course of next year.

I suppose that you adhere to  
your project of going to Mexico  
in February & as the season  
advances working up northward  
along the west side of the Continent -  
For my part I have a positive longing  
to see your Pacific region & should  
think myself too fortunate if I  
could find myself there in your  
company - But intense as is my  
desire to accomplish it I fear that  
the difficulties are too great. My wife's  
health is not strong - even our short

Journeys in Europe fatigue her very much and it is quite out of the question her undertaking a journey to the far west, while on the other hand she cannot bear the idea of my again going so far & being as she says out of reach in case I were laid up. She has offered to cross the Atlantic with me & to remain in some quiet sea-side place on the Atlantic side - if indeed there be such a thing as a quiet place in your go-a-head country -

But on my side I cannot see my way to leaving her so far from home in a strange place - even though to us there is little or no difference between the U. States & England. If it were possible for one of my sons to cross the Atlantic at the same time the case would

be different - but of that there is little chance - It is more likely that I shall resign myself to cropping a few weeks before the meeting of the Brit. Association at Montreal, & seeing something of the vegetation of the Atlantic States. I suppose that a visit to the White Mountains in New Hampshire will not be without interest and I dare say that you can recommend me to some botanical friend <sup>at Cambridge</sup> who would direct me how to use a short time to the best advantage.

But in any case I shall be anxious to know how to communicate with you during your journey & as I suppose you will have some letters forwarded from Cambridge I shall be glad to know how to secure that mine may be among the number. -

I am anxious to know your views

will agree that the multiplication of synonyms  
has already become the plague & opprobrium  
of Natural History - & will grow worse if effective  
means be not found to arrest it. Experience  
shows that good advice is no check - There is  
nothing to prevent any ignoramus not only from  
publishing as his own all the species transferred  
from one genus to another by B. & H. ~~from~~ but  
further from coining new specific names  
for each of them, unless botanists agree to  
recognize the absolute claim of the older  
specific name -

I shall be much indebted to you if you will  
put your opinion on these points on paper -  
— a separate slip which if you allow it  
I may show to others - Perhaps Hooker  
has written to you on the subject. I don't  
think you will agree altogether with him -

I have seen Bentham to day - extremely  
weak - confined to one floor - his head clear  
but fearing the least exertion - He may  
tally a little but the sand is nearly run out.  
With my wife's kindest remembrances & good  
wishes for you & Mrs Gray

Always sincerely yours

Wm Ball

I quite agree with you as to the names of  
natural orders & tribes in the Gen. Plantarum  
but it is now too late -

Where ~~genera~~<sup>a genus</sup> previously admitted is  
now united to some other ~~genera~~<sup>older</sup> previously  
established, how are you to cite the  
names of the species of which it is composed.  
Take for example the Species of *Ligularia* united  
by B. & H. to *Senecio* - & a species *L. mongolica* D.C.  
of which the specific name has not been preoccupied.

I admit all that A. DeCandolle says - we must  
not make B. & H. say what they have not said -  
& write *Senecio mongolicus* B. & H. - But on the

other hand there is something preposterous  
in proposing that in this and hundreds, nay  
thousands, of similar cases <sup>Mr Jackson says</sup> he sh<sup>d</sup> be instructed  
to write *S. mongolicus* D. Jackson. When is nine  
cases out of ten Mr Jackson would not know the  
species or the genus if he saw it, and where  
the entry in the new *Stendel* would not refer  
the reader to any work in which he would  
find the plant under that name. The question  
is whether any alternative course may not  
be found - In spite of all that has been urged  
against lengthening the name - and the fact  
that the name of a plant is a binomial consisting  
of the name of a genus & that of a species - I continue  
to think that the least inconvenience will be found  
in citing (within brackets) the name of the first describer  
of the species, with or without the name of the  
genus to which he referred it. This plant was

first named *Cineraria mongolica* by Turczaninow  
then *Ligul. mongolica* D.C. in Prod. - I quite write  
*Senecio mongolicus* (Turcz.) or *Turcz. Cineraria*.



Now take another case in the same genus  
*Ligularia amplexicaulis* DC. - It happens  
in this case that Wallich after first calling it  
*Onica* called it *Senecio amplex.* in his Catalogue  
but the difficulty arises in another way  
Both C. B. Clarke (*Compos. Indica*) & Hooker in  
H. Brit. Ind. have overlooked the fact that  
there is an older species *S. amplexicaulis* H.B.K.  
What then is to be done with Wallich's plant.  
A new name becomes a necessity - I suppose  
there is nothing for it but to trust to the  
discretion of Mr Jackson -

There is a third way of escape but one which  
I should not <sup>on my own authority</sup> venture to propose, though  
there is much to be said for it - & that is in  
large genera with sections that have been  
regarded as genera by reputable authors to make  
the name a trinomial - & say *Senecio ligularia*  
*amplexicaulis* D.C. and *Senecio Peruvianus*  
*amplexicaulis* H.B.K. I think the introduction  
of new names for old plants i.e. plants well  
known by existing names so serious an  
evil that it sh<sup>d</sup> not be incurred unless the  
necessity is stringent - we must face the fact  
that the mass of material is so great & the  
strain on the memory already so serious  
that we must not shrink from even a  
daring novelty if it will promote the ends of

Science

I think that where ~~there~~ a monotypic  
genus of a previous author has been  
incorporated in a larger one - although  
the specific name has not been mentioned  
the same implication is so clear that  
unless you adopt the suggestion of giving  
the first describer of the species in brackets  
you may properly give that of the authors  
of the generic identification

Thus I would write *Mesogramma apiifolium*  
DC. either *Senecio apiifolius* (DC. *Mesogramma*)  
or *S. apiifolius* B&H -

A second difficulty in nomenclature nearly  
allied to the first has not I think been  
adequately met - and urgently requires a positive  
decision - What specific name should  
be adopted where a plant has been placed  
by different genera under different specific  
names? To save place I will refer you to two  
very short papers of mine in the London Journal of  
Botany - New Series Vol VI (1877) p. 357 &  
Vol VII (1878) p. 140 - The question is whether  
the rule of applying the older specific name  
(when not open to objections easily defined) in  
every case, both as to the past & future publications  
should be uniformly applied - I think you